

Why we want your support for this year's Global Drug Survey

Global Drug Survey (GDS) is the world's biggest annual survey of drug use. And this year, we're bigger than ever before.

This year GDS is about to become truly global. Our findings will be translated into Spanish, Portuguese, French, Flemish, German, Hungarian and Danish with media partners in the USA (Huffington Post); UK (Guardian, Mixmag, Hot Press & Gay Times); Australia and New Zealand (Fairfax Media) and Europe including Liberation in France, Der Morgen in Belgium and still others in Spain, Portugal, Denmark as well as Brazil and Mexico. We are asking for your help.

This year other than drug prevalence, cost and patterns of use including new drug trends, GDS has a big focus on marijuana. We will ask what effects the weed you smoke at the moment has. Does it make you sleepy, or tired? Hyper and excited? Relaxed or paranoid? Then we ask users to describe their perfect smoke, so we can share that information with weed growers – so they might diversify away from strong skunk weed, which we know from our other research is not what most people prefer.

Independent of any government or international monitoring or regulatory body, GDS was founded by Consultant Psychiatrist and Addiction Medicine Specialist Dr Adam Winstock to give a voice to the people who know most about drugs: the people who use them.

Growing out of a decade of researching clubbers and new drug trends GDS2014 aims to reach an estimated 60,000 people this year with support from media partners across 4 continents.

Adam is supported by a diverse expert advisory group and academic network comprised of researchers, harm reductionists, policy makers, drug users, clinicians, tech people and a bunch of other all-round smart decent people from across the world.

GDS thrives on people's generosity and curiosity. Between GDS 2012 and GDS 2013 over 37,000 people took part in our anonymous online surveys and other 20,000 on the drug meter and drink meter apps.

Over the last two years we have reported the biggest stories on emerging drug trends and the use of the internet and the Silk Road, the increasing role of prescription drugs and the impact of drug policy on drug use.

We have explored drugs and pleasure and drugs and pain, sex and drugs, and what happens when you get caught with drugs. Our work helps drug users and doctors to be aware of drug risks, when they exist, like the risk of serious bladder damage with ketamine use and of overdose and withdrawal with GHB. Our work also helps people who like using drugs keep them and those they care for safe. Our drug meter minutes on the Global Drug Survey YouTube Channel have been viewed over 40,000 times and we are producing and uploading every month.

GDS has its methods approved by a university ethics committee and has its findings published in high-ranking academic journals year on year.

GDS offers data not opinion. We state the obvious fact that drug use does not define an individual. Our work reminds the world's media and governments that people who use drugs are mostly smart, and that they use drugs as one of a number of lifestyle activities (some even do yoga and are vegetarians) and that they are as keen as anyone else to be respected and informed so that they can keep themselves, their mates and their community safe.

GDS also states that any conversation about harm needs to start with a conversation about pleasure

Why?

Most people who drink and / or use drugs don't become dependent or experience significant problems with them. In the vast majority of cases neither are they used to manage underlying emotional or physical problems: people take them to enhance or even create an experience. And of course they are, in many cases, intensely pleasurable. Users know that, and to speak solely of harm, means many switch off. But drugs *are* also harmful, and the best way to discuss ways to reduce those harms is to acknowledge many people's main motivation for using them: pleasure and fun.

What's this year's survey about?

This year alongside our ground-breaking research into users' marijuana preferences, we will be undertaking the biggest ever survey of harm reduction strategies among drug users, finding out what people do and what they might be willing to do in the real world to maximise the fun they have while minimising the risks of harm. We'll be asking about nitrous oxide (laughing gas) and prescription drug use, spotting new psychoactive drugs, exploring what happens around the world when you get caught with drugs and the whole murky and increasingly controversial area of workplace drug-testing.

We'll also continue to monitor how happy you are, what you drink and what drugs cause you most worries in your mates, what you want to use less of and how many of you end up in emergency rooms around the world each year because of drink and drugs.

So whether you drinks, smoke, snort, fix, drop or just pick up a prescription medication to help you sleep, GDS is keen for you to add your voice to an estimated 60,000 who will take part this year. We'll be launching in Australia on November 12th, USA and South America on the 16th and in the UK/ Europe on November 19th at www.globaldrugsurvey.com/GDS2014

Please take part, facebook and tweet the link so we can reach our target of somewhere between 50,000-100,000 people (yep that is a very large number of people indeed)

As always you will be the first to see the results as they are published across the world by our fantastic media partners in March through April 2014.

As ever, thank you – we really cannot do this without you
Adam

Dr Adam R Winstock
Founder Global Drug Survey
Consultant Psychiatrist and Addiction Medicine Specialist